

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response to the Office Action mailed on March 23, 2006. Reexamination in light of the amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 28-43 are currently pending in this application, with claims 28, 32, 35, 37, 40, and 42 being independent.

No new matter has been added.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

At least for the following reasons, if the allowance of the claims is not forthcoming at the very least and a new ground of rejection made against any of these claims, then a *new non-final Office Action* is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-6, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,879,962 to Smith et al. (Smith) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,125,306 to Shimada et al. (Shimada).

This rejection is traversed at least for the following reasons.

Whereas page 2 of the Office Action refers to claims 1, 3-6, 8 and 9, page 3 of the Office Action identifies claims 1-11. However, the cancellation of claims 3 and 8 can be found within the Amendment In Response To Non-Final Office Action filed on August 31, 2006.

Accordingly, while not conceding the propriety of these rejections and in order to advance prosecution of the above-identified application, claims 1-2, 4-7, and 9-11 have been

canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of their underlying subject matter. Thus, the rejection of claims 1-2, 4-7, and 9-11 is moot.

Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 28-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0099655 to Melchior et al. (Melchior).

This rejection is traversed at least for the following reasons.

The above-identified application is entitled to the benefit of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555 having a priority date of March 31, 2000.

However, the filing date for Melchior of October 16, 2001 is later than the priority date of the Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555. Melchior appears to rely upon the benefit of Provisional Application No. 60/240,818 of October 16, 2000. Nevertheless, the filing date for Provisional Application No. 60/240,818 of October 16, 2000 is also later than the priority date of the Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555. Thus, Melchior is unavailable as prior art at least for this reason.

An English language translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555 has been previously filed on November 12, 2004. Please take this English language translation into account in the examination of this application.

Withdrawal of these rejections and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 37-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0049622 to Lettich et al. (Lettich).

This rejection is traversed at least for the following reasons.

The above-identified application is entitled to the benefit of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555 having a priority date of March 31, 2000.

However, the filing date for Lettich of April 26, 2001 is later than the priority date of the Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555. Lettich appears to rely upon the benefit of Provisional Application No. 60/200,035 of April 27, 2000. Nevertheless, the filing date for Provisional Application No. 60/200,035 of April 27, 2000 is also later than the priority date of the Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555. Thus, Lettich is unavailable as prior art at least for this reason.

An English language translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555 has been previously filed on November 12, 2004. Please take this English language translation into account in the examination of this application.

Withdrawal of these rejections and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, all the claims now pending in the present application are allowable, and the present application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reexamination and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and remarks is courteously solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone Brian K. Dutton, Reg. No. 47,255, at 202-955-8753 or the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number.

If any fee is required or any overpayment made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee or credit the overpayment to Deposit Account # 18-0013.

Dated: June 21, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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